

# Reducing SPAM

## Effective ways to get only the e-mails you really want

Commercial solicitations in e-mail form, known as SPAM, are annoying and time consuming. And just about everyone with an e-mail address receives them daily. But there are some helpful things you can do to slow the onslaught of unwanted e-mail.

### SPAM LEGISLATION

Effective July 1, 2003, Ind. Code Sec. 24-5-22-1, et seq. regulates the transmission of SPAM and gives a private right of action to recipients of the unwanted messages. Those successful in prevailing in an action under this section are entitled to an injunction to stop future violations of the statute, presumptive damages of \$500 for each message, as well as reimbursement of costs and attorney fees.

The federal CAN-SPAM (Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing) Act, which became effective January 1, 2004, prohibits false or misleading headers and subject lines and requires commercial e-mails to include a recipient opt-out method. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) along with state agencies and Internet providers are authorized to enforce the CAN-SPAM Act, which provides fines up to \$11,000 per violation.

While state and federal legislation is certainly a start in eliminating SPAM from your inbox, it is important to understand that many spammers find ways to hijack e-mail addresses and send messages to unsuspecting consumers. In addition, they are sometimes hard to locate, which makes enforcement difficult.

### REDUCING SPAM

- **Guard your e-mail address when surfing the Internet.** Try not to use your e-mail address when posting to newsgroups, chat rooms, Web sites or online membership directories.
- **Review the privacy policy of each Web site to which you submit information.** Check to see if the company sells your address to other companies (or "partners") for commercial solicitations, allows you to opt-out of this provision or refuses to submit your address to any other company.
- **Obtain additional e-mail addresses.** With the additional e-mail accounts available on your current Internet Service Provider (ISP) account and other free e-mail accounts from MSN and Yahoo, you may wish to provide your friends and family with your personal e-mail address, and utilize your additional address for Internet browsing.
- **Consider a disposable e-mail account.** You may wish to use a separate e-mail address that forwards mail to your permanent account. Once you start receiving SPAM, sign up for a new address. This allows you to stop the SPAM without affecting your permanent address.
- **Create a unique e-mail address that utilizes both letters and numbers.** Many spammers use software to send e-mail to various name combinations at large ISPs. Having a unique address (i.e. j1d2o3e, as opposed to jdoe) may reduce the amount of SPAM.
- **Turn on your e-mail filter.** Many e-mail accounts provide a tool to filter out or deposit into a separate folder any mail that comes from common spammers or those that have objectionable material in the subject line or body of the message.
- **Complain to the sender's ISP.** Most ISPs have rules against using the system to SPAM others. Complaining to the ISP may result in the spammer's account being closed.

### RESOURCES

The Consumer Protection Division of the Indiana Attorney General's Office works to safeguard the rights of Indiana citizens every day. If you have questions or complaints regarding SPAM, or other appropriate consumer issues, contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division using the address and phone number listed below, or visit [www.in.gov/attorneygeneral](http://www.in.gov/attorneygeneral) for more information.

